

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

The Caldwell Group Inc.

Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center

The Caldwell Group Saves Time with New Software System

Client Profile:

The Caldwell Group, Inc., incorporated in 1954, designs and manufactures industrial lift and material handling equipment. The Rockford, Illinois-based company employs 75 people.

Situation:

The Caldwell Group was evaluating the purchase and implementation of a manufacturing software system. The new system would enable customers to configure and order products on line and permit internal sales staff to price products and options. The Caldwell team called upon the Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center (IMEC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

In order to maximize the performance of the system and ensure that it met the company's needs, IMEC specialists suggested that the Caldwell Group analyze existing administrative procedures to identify the value and non-value-added activities. IMEC and the Caldwell team mapped the office value stream to identify the cause of quoting delays. The team discovered that, because Caldwell operates in two buildings, quote folders were moving too slowly between departments, and significant time was being wasted by associates looking for paper project folders. A future state map illustrated the recommended improvements, and created the foundation for the software system. Three specific solutions were identified: the number of associates involved in quoting decisions was reduced; the system facilitated use of electronic routing based on product; and quotes were routed to specific people based on product. In general, non-value-added steps such as multiple checks steps were eliminated or consolidated by restructuring and re-organizing work. Further, IMEC trained the Caldwell Group staff on Value Stream Mapping (VSM) techniques and overall Lean principles, and prepared the company to continue making improvements on its own.

Results:

Anticipated:

- * Reduction in operating costs by \$50,000.
- * Reduction in queue time by 30 percent.
- * Reduction in touch time by 10 percent.
- * Investment of \$200,000 in facilities and equipment.

Testimonial:

"We did not want to put a new software system on top of bad processes. IMEC helped us accomplish this objective."

Doug Stitt, President

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